

NOTiCIAS DEL OSO

May 27, 2010

#16

Welcome to the very last ESL newsletter for the 2009-2010 school year!

It may have seemed like a lot of work on the surface, but I've truly enjoyed putting my journalism skills to good use through this newsletter, and your feedback has been absolutely invaluable this year.

I hope that the newsletters have been helpful at times, and next year I will continue to send out these little typo-ridden info sheets when needed. Especially as it appears that the ESL program is in for more and more changes as our demographics as not only a school but a whole district continue to shift. For now, I'll give you all a look ahead into some changes that you may expect to see next year with the ESL program and changes that have already been installed for this year's placement.

Finally, I appreciate the support that the whole staff has offered not only to me, but to my students this year. I'm very lucky to work with such a supportive group of people, and my kiddos are certainly lucky to learn from you all.

Erin Van Sickle

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes...

If I could ask for one perfect skill to deal with ESL, I would beg for the ability to adapt easily to changes. Until everyone (on a national, state, district, and even campus level) figures out the best way to reach our LEP population, there will continue to be countless changes. As with anything else, the department is exercising a bit of trial and error in what will work best for our students, and we'll all just have to "hang in there" until we find a working solution.

This year the biggest changes have come in the exiting and placement process that I am in the process of completing for the year. Below I'll give you all the necessary 4-1-1, and provide you with the rationale for any changes for the 2010-2011 school year.

Who exited this year?

Oh, I can't tell you specific names in this type of setting, however I CAN say that I am exiting 7 of the 22 remaining sixth graders, 5 of this year's 17 seventh graders, and I anticipate exiting 1 out of 6 for the 8th graders who are moving up to Horn High School next year. Once the paperwork is finalized with the appropriate signatures (hopefully sometime early next week) I will give each teacher a list of the students and their class placements for the upcoming year as they stand. Currently, I am not anticipating needing 7th or 8th grade reading.

What do you mean there won't be 7th grade ESL Reading?

This is one of those glorious changes that I've been alluding to all newsletter long. This year,

the district has decided that if a student scored an 'Advanced' or 'Advanced High' on their TELPAS Reading and yet still did not pass the TAKS exam, the problem facing these students is not language-related enough to warrant staying in ESL Reading, where the focus is placed on increasing fluency with the English language. Rather, the BEES center will suggest that they be placed in ESL English (because they are not exiting and therefore are required by law to be served by an ESL-certified teacher at least once a week) and Voyager Reading. Currently, all but one of my 7th graders qualify for this new recommendation. While there are additional changes to the placement standards, this is the one that affects the students at Berry the most for the upcoming year.

Okay, so what ARE the new placement standards?

The following is what the BEES center will use, in conjunction with the LPAC minutes from this year's meetings, to decide placement recommendations. The BEES center has decided to take over this responsibility for the whole district this year, rather than having the individual teachers do it as has been the case in the past.

1. The student will **EXIT** if he/she...
 - a. is a Fluent English Speaker (FES)
 - b. passed TAKS/TAKS A reading in English
 - c. passed TAKS/TAKS A writing in English (7th grade only) or scored AH on TELPAS writing.
2. The student will be in **BOTH ESL reading** and **ESL English** if he/she
 - a. did not pass TAKS reading in English
 - b. scored beginner or intermediate in TELPAS reading
3. The student will be in **ESL English** and **Voyager Reading** if he/she
 - a. did not pass TAKS reading in English
 - b. scored Advanced or Advanced High on TELPAS reading
4. The student will be in only **ESL English** if he/she
 - a. passed TAKS reading
 - b. did not meet the writing exit criteria
 - c. and/or did not meet the OLPT English fluency (FES) requirement

What does this mean for our school?

It means that none of the English teachers will have ESL students (with the exception of denials or students who require Basic English per ARD decision). It also means that because many of our students are struggling with getting up to grade-level on their reading levels but have mastered the language well enough to score well on TELPAS, most of our kiddos are going to be "transition" students soon! That's always our goal - to get them into the general education population as much as possible as soon as possible!

**Once again, THANK YOU for working hard all year with our ESL students.
Have a fabulous, sunny summer!**